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First Lady announces new Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Parent Association

-- Association will provide support to Virginia's foster, kinship and adoptive families --

Richmond – First Lady Anne Holton today joined with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) to announce the formation of the Virginia Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Parents Association.

The announcement was made at the Children's Museum of Richmond, where foster, kinship and adoptive parents from around the state came to be honored for their commitment in recognition of May as Foster Care Appreciation Month.

"The association will support the recruitment and retention of foster, kinship and adoptive parents, provide training and support for them, and provide information to the state about what these families need in terms of support and training, and to advocate for the needs of children and families," said First Lady Anne Holton.

The new association will host additional "kick-off" events statewide beginning Saturday, May 6 in Fredericksburg. Subsequent events will be held in Portsmouth, Lynchburg, Abingdon and Richmond by June 20.

"The events are a chance to engage foster, adoptive and kinship parents into the association... they will be an opportunity for parents to provide insight on the issues that they see, and provide guidance for how the association can meet their needs," said Holton.

Across Virginia, approximately 6,500 licensed kinship and non-relative foster homes provide care, support, safety, guidance and shelter for nearly 8,000 children in foster care.

"I encourage foster, kinship and adoptive parents across Virginia to go online to the new Web site – <http://www.fosteradoptiveparents.org> – and learn more about this organization which will provide a bridge for parents, children and the social services community to work together to learn, grow, communicate, advocate and share ideas with each other," said Holton.

"The Virginia Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents Association will provide support for these families to successfully fulfill their parenting roles and raise healthy and productive children," said Anthony Conyers, Jr., Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services.

For more information visit <http://www.fosteradoptiveparents.org> or <http://www.dss.virginia.gov>.

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